Black Eye

OCTOBER
NUMBER TWO
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by Dylan Horrocks

Pickle

Issue Number 2
October 1993

by
Dylan Horrocks
editor
Dolan Hicks (mrs.)
publisher
Michel Vrána

"When somebody asks me what got me into comics, I can only think of one word: malnutrition"

— Will Eisner

PICKLE #2, October 1993, Published quarterly by Black Eye Productions, 338 Kribs Street, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada N3C 3J3 voice/fax (519) 658-0416. All characters, stories and art are copyright © 1993 Dylan Horrocks, except Catwoman & Robin ™ & © D.C. Comics. "Men that Perish" appeared previously in FOX COMICS no 27. Thanks to Dave Vodicka and Philip Bentley. "Letter From Catwoman" was drawn for Ed Pinsent's birthday.

PRINTED IN CANADA

Letter from Hicksville

Well, here we are at last with issue number two. We do apologise for the delay, but it's all my fault! You see, now that **Pickle** was being properly published, I thought I ought to send the artwork to Canada by courier, the way all big media people send everything nowadays. Now, down here in Hicksville, New Zealand, the only courier we have is a fellow named Hyram Dinch, who runs a little boat out of Hicks Bay. Of course, I had no idea that the couriers these media people use nowadays race about in jetplanes and vans, and I'm afraid old Hyram took several months to cross the Pacific Ocean, and he had all kinds of adventures on the way. By then, however, Tragedy Strikes Press seems to have – er – struck tragedy, and disappeared. Undaunted, Hyram trudged around Ontario until he found Black Eye Productions, and there he met Michel, who had edited **Pickle** at Tragedy Strikes. And so now we're published by Black Eye! I've just now had a lovely letter from Hyram, who has been running messages all over Ontario to save up the money to buy a faster boat, and so next time, the trip should be a bit quicker! In the meantime, we've had some lovely letters. It's always nice to find out something about our readers, and already we've learnt something rather interesting: it seems our readers like reading **Pickle** to their cats! Perhaps more of you might like to write in and tell us how your cats (or other household pets) have enjoyed **Pickle**? In time, we may be able to run a Pets column – how marvellous!

So, to all of you (including Jen's and Brian's cats),
I remain yours faithfully,

Dolan Hicks

Dolan Hicks (mrs.), Editor

Dear Mrs. Hicks...

We've had some lovely letters since our last issue. Here's one from Jen "Pez Girl" McCabe, in Seattle, WA, USA:

Dear Dylan,
Thank you! I just read your comic... now I'm a happy girl. I was absolutely giddy while reading **Pickle**... I found myself standing on my chair (habit – induced by glee) and reading aloud to my cats. For some reason it helped me out of my pouty mood. I was once fired from a Cafe by the owner – her reason – in exact words..."Jen, we're going to have to let you go..." I asked her "Why?" and she said, "Well, I'm sorry, but you're a little too existential to work here." No kidding! Obviously, I found it difficult to stay angry. Well, I really appreciated the "Real Death Theatre with Moxie and Toxie." The funniest thing happened when I read your comic though. I got a crush on the character "Sam." Silly, huh?

Up On a Chair,
Jen "Pez Girl" McCabe

P.S. I feel that Sam should play the accordion in an issue.

Well Jen, I'm very glad you enjoyed the comic, but I'm sorry to hear it made you giddy! Consult your doctor, perhaps. Sam has asked me for your address. Should I give it to him? Perhaps you should read his story in this issue before saying yes!

(continued on last page)

VOLUME ONE IN A FOUR VOLUME EPIC!

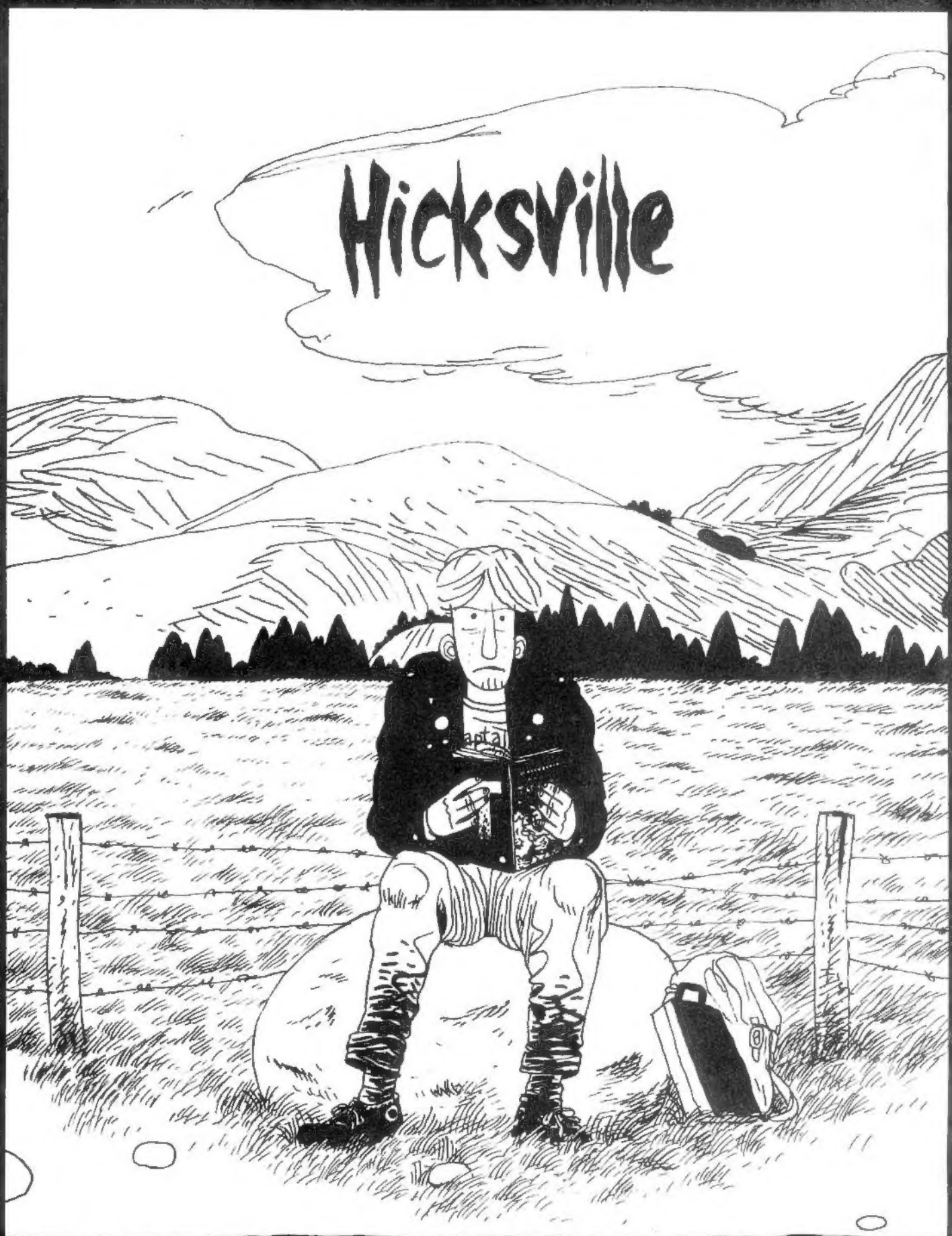
Dick Burger's The FALL of CAPTAIN TOMORROW®

Eternal Comics™

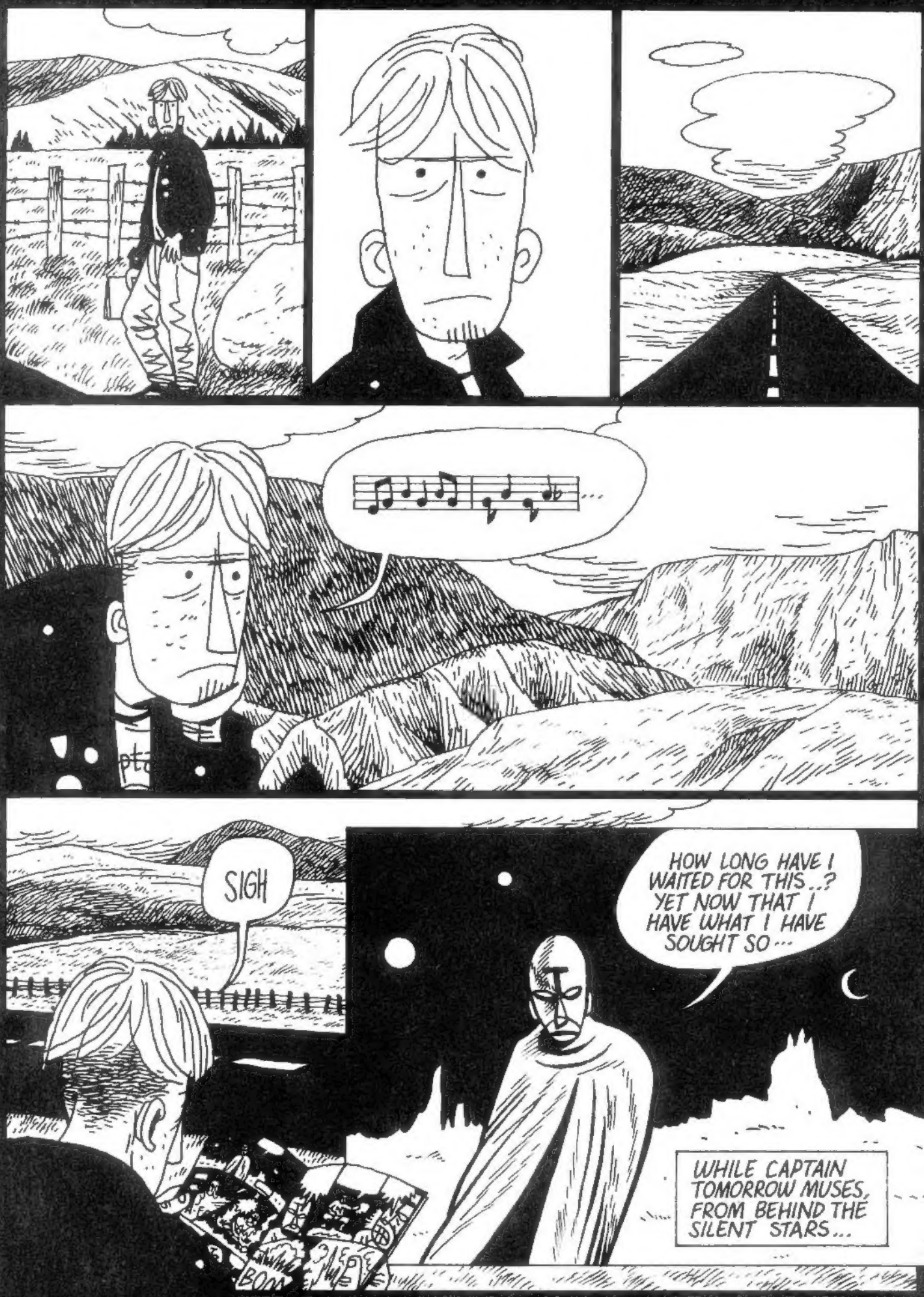
VOLUME 1 OF 4. WINTER 1993. U.S.$6.95. CAN$8.95.

CAPTAIN TOMORROW STANDS AT THE CREST OF MOUNT MEGATRON WHILE THE TWIN MOONS OF DALYCON-IVB RISE...
I HAVE THE POWER!
THE POWER TO SNUFF OUT THE SUN! TO DESTROY THIS WORLD AND ALL THAT DWELLS HERE!
IT WOULD TAKE BUT A THOUGHT!
THE POWER IS MINE!
THIS IS A STORY OF LOSS AND GAIN!
OF LIFE AND DEATH!
OF GODS AND MORTALS!
IT IS THE STORY OF...
THE FALL OF Captain TOMORROW™
written & drawn by Dick Burger.
LETTERED BY CURT OVBLESKI

HERE IN MY FIST I HOLD THE KEY TO THE UNEARTHLY POWER OF EMON-PI!
NOW IS THE MOMENT OF SUPREME AWE, OF ABSOLUTE WONDER, OF OVER-WHELMING DOUBT!
FOR NOW I AM FACED WITH WHAT I AM BECOME!
AND WHAT I AM YET TO BE!
I COULD BE A GOD!!
FOOOOSH!
OMNIPOTENT POWER COULD BE MINE!
WITH THIS I COULD CRUSH ALL EVIL! DESTROY ALL WRONG! FOR I NOW HAVE POWER OVER LIFE AND DEATH!!
AND YET...
...TO BE A GOD...
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN...?



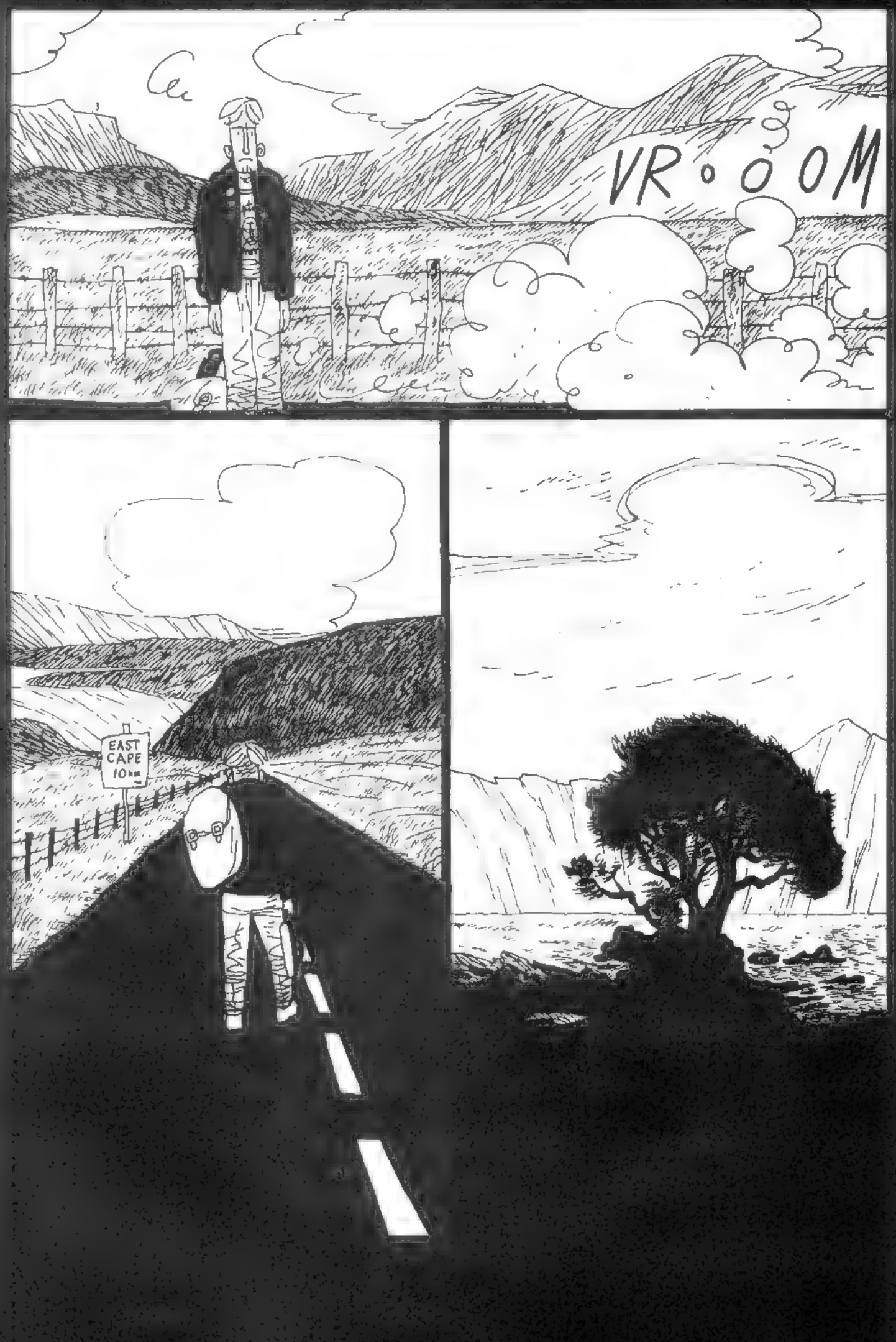
for Paul Gravett

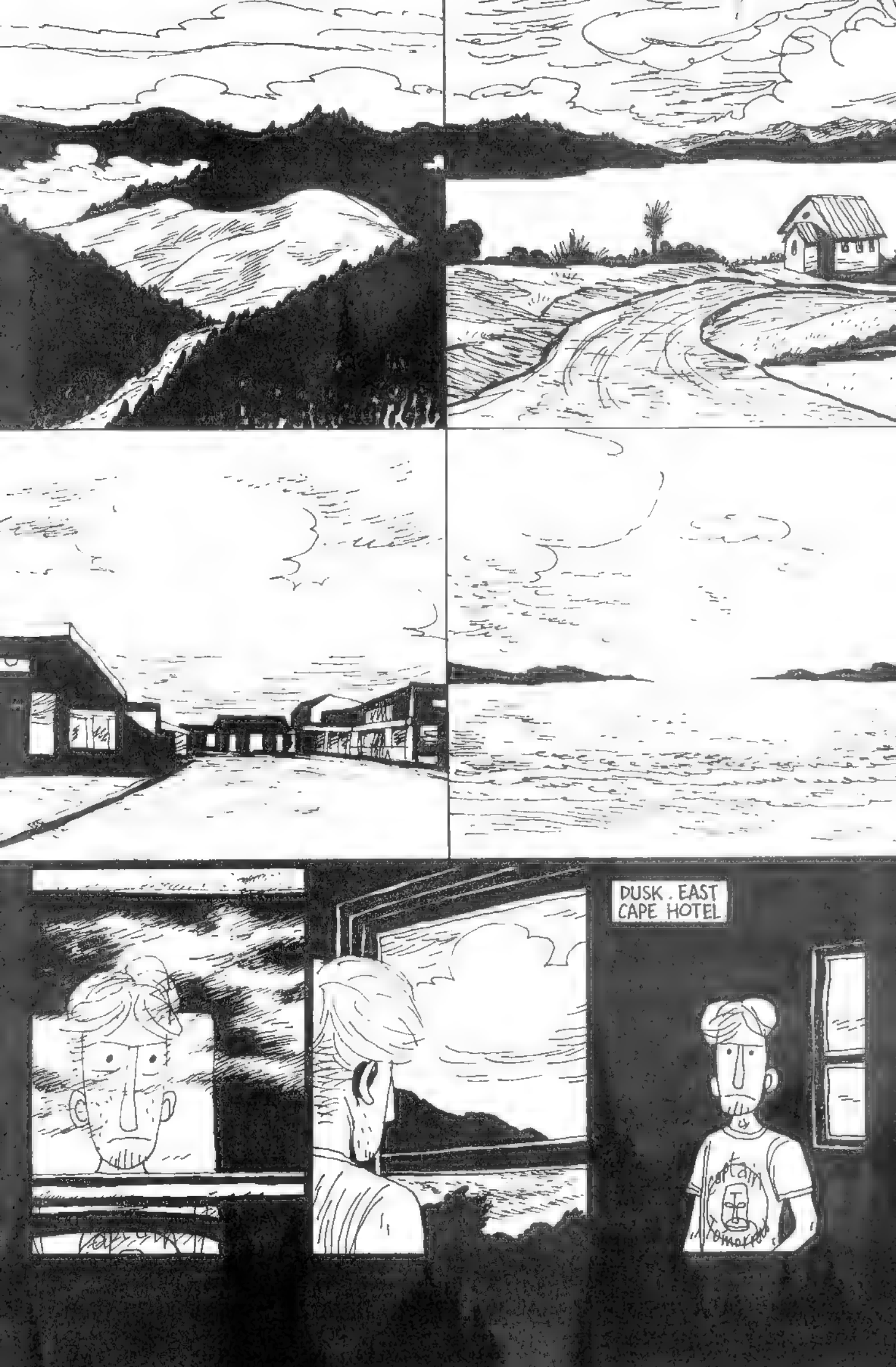

SIGH
HOW LONG HAVE I WAITED FOR THIS..? YET NOW THAT I HAVE WHAT I HAVE SOUGHT SO...
WHILE CAPTAIN TOMORROW MUSES, FROM BEHIND THE SILENT STARS...
BOOM

...DANGER COMES!!!
ARH!
I COME TO SLAY A GOD!!
KA-FOOM
SCREECH!!
YOU HEADED FOR HICKSVILLE?
UH... YEAH!

GET IN!
THANK GOD YOU SHOWED UP. I THOUGHT THE BUS WENT ALL THE WAY TO HICKSVILLE, BUT APPARENTLY NOT. I'M VERY GRATEFUL TO YOU, MISS... .
YOU AMERICAN?
YEAH. NAME'S LEONARD BATTS. I'M A JOURNALIST AND CRITIC FOR COMICS WORLD MAGAZINE.
COMICS WORLD? WHAT-YOU WRITE ABOUT COMICS?
YEAH. I'VE JUST FINISHED A BOOK ON JACK KIRBY AND-
WIERDEST FUCKEN JOB I EVER HEARD OF ...
WELL... UH...

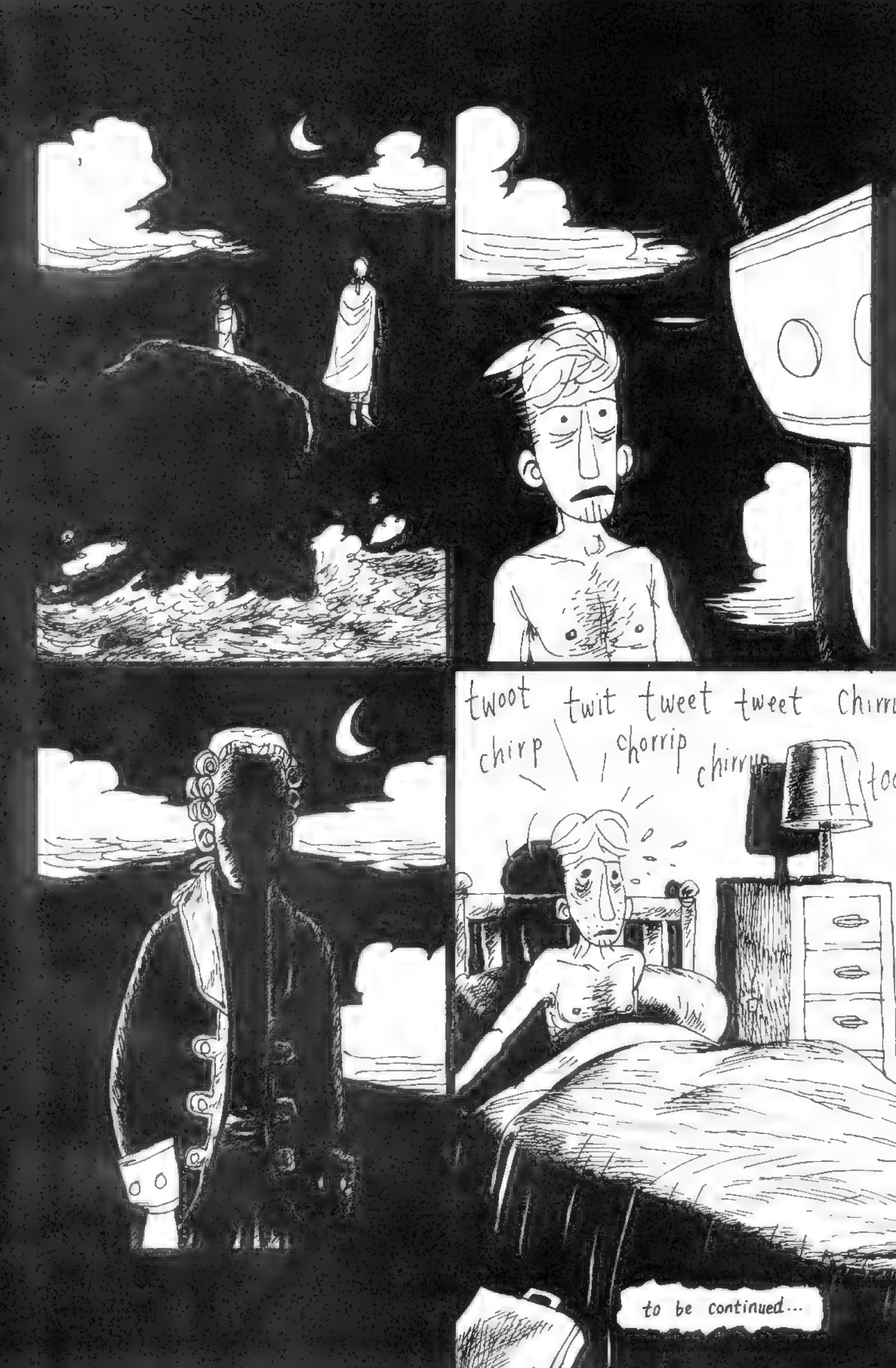
YOU HERE TO TALK TO KUPE?
UH... WHO?
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE THEN?
EVER HEARD OF DICK BURGER?
SCREECH
DICK BURGER..?
YEAH... YOU KNOW HIM?
GET OUT.


VR·OOM
EAST CAPE 10km


DUSK . EAST
CAPE HOTEL

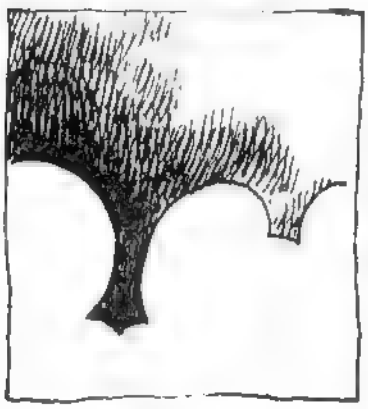
HO
captain

The Captain and Honeheke decide to move north, in the hope of determining the islands' new location...
Early on the third day, they find a recently vacated campsite...
Friend of yours?
...
Ah-hah! There's your mystery man.
♪♫♪.♫

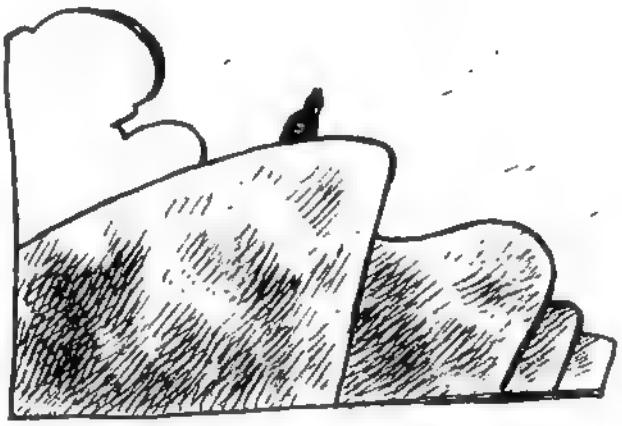

twoot twit tweet tweet
chirp chorrip
to be continued...

Letter from Catwoman.

14/8/91 (Somewhere in Sth. America)

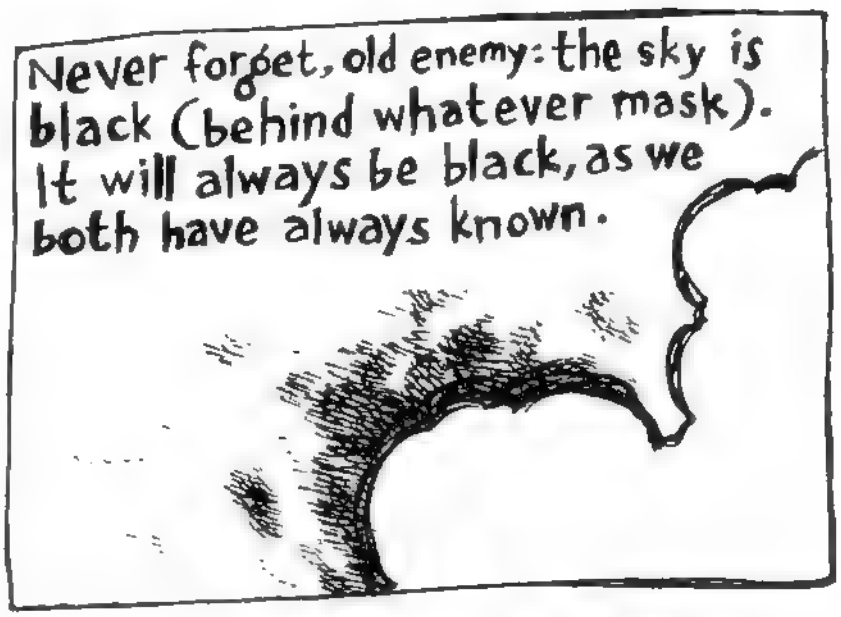


I've been exploring the clifftops.

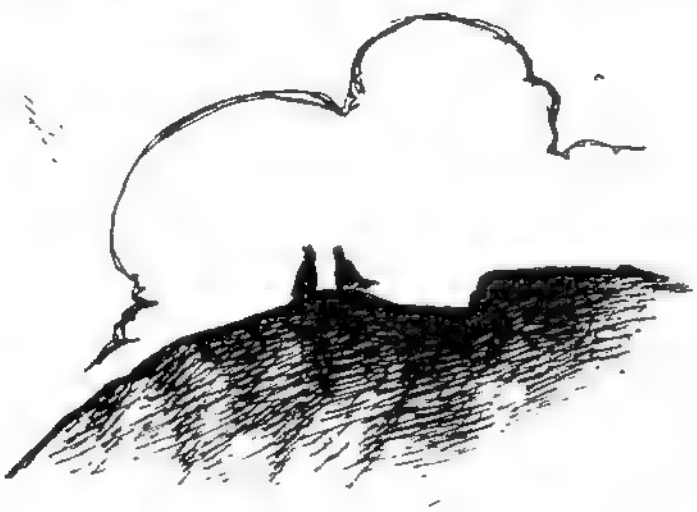


Even at 900' the shells still gleam pale phosphorescence.

Never forget, old enemy: the sky is black (behind whatever mask). It will always be black, as we both have always known.



-for Ed Pinsent. © 1991 dylan horrocks.



Robin sends his love.

As ever mine,

C xxx

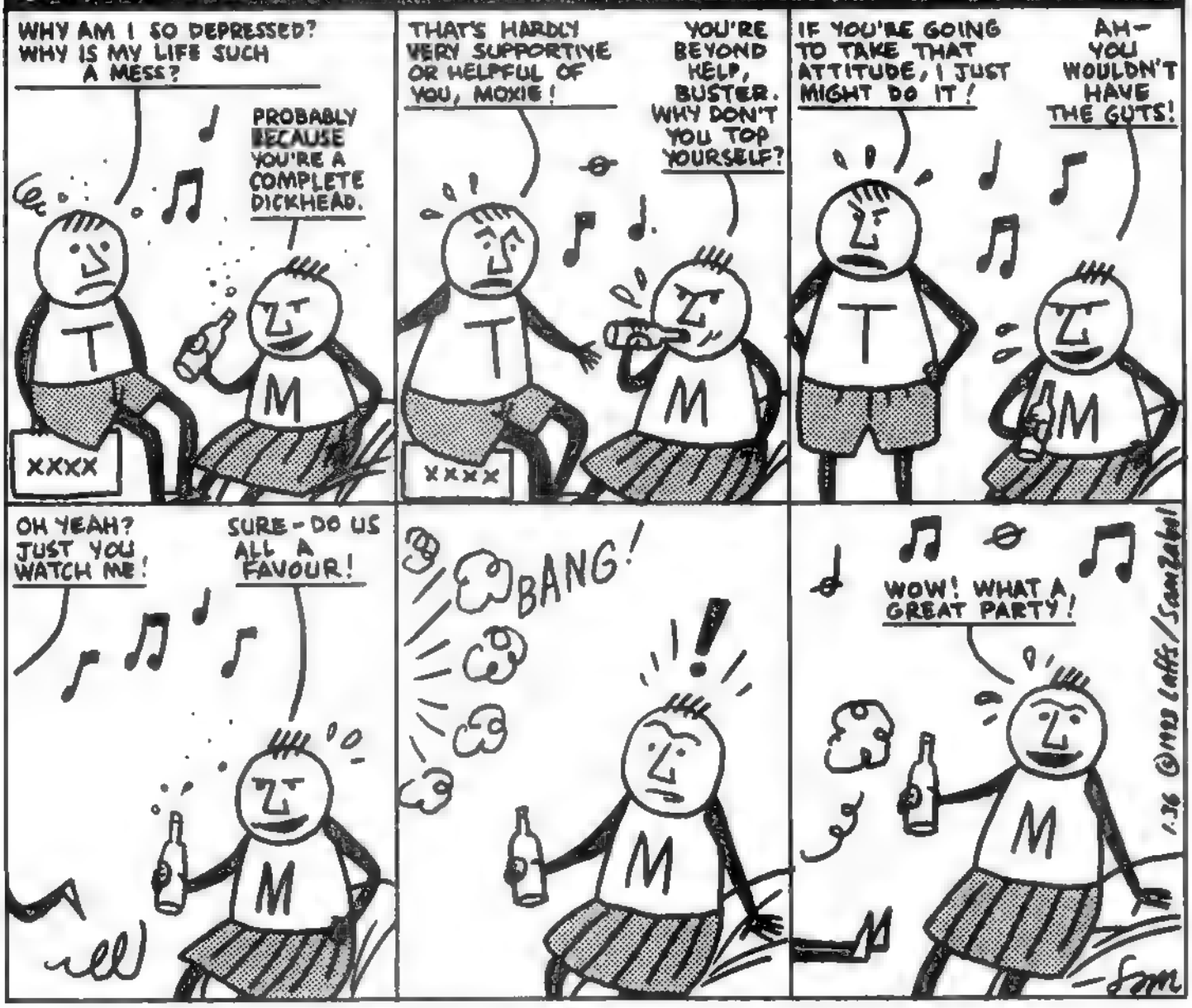
HALFWAY TO HEAVEN...

IF ONLY MY LIFE HAD A LITTLE LOVE IN IT, I'D BE A HAPPY PERSON - I KNOW I WOULD...
ANOTHE
BLOODY
CAFE
HERALD
SAM, I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU FOR ABOUT AN HOUR FROM ACROSS THE CAFE, AND I THINK I'VE FALLEN MADLY IN LOVE WITH YOU. I REALISE YOU'RE A MISERABLE, DEPRESSING NO-HOPER, BUT I'VE ALWAYS KIND OF LIKED THAT IN A MAN, AND BESIDES I'M SURE I CAN DRAW OUT THE HAPPY CAREFREE WILD AND CRAZY GUY IN YOU.
...
SO HOWABOUT IT..?
ER... EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT WHILE I CONSULT MY HOROSCOPE.
SPORT
HOROSCOPE
WK. ENDING 24TH
LIBRA: WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, YOU IDIOT! BUY HER A CUP OF COFFEE!
TAURUS: CAREER
UM... CAN I GET YOU A COFFEE..?
FORGET IT. MAKE ME ONE IN THE MORNING.
YOU'RE A VERY SICK MAN, SAM...

-by SAM ZABEL.

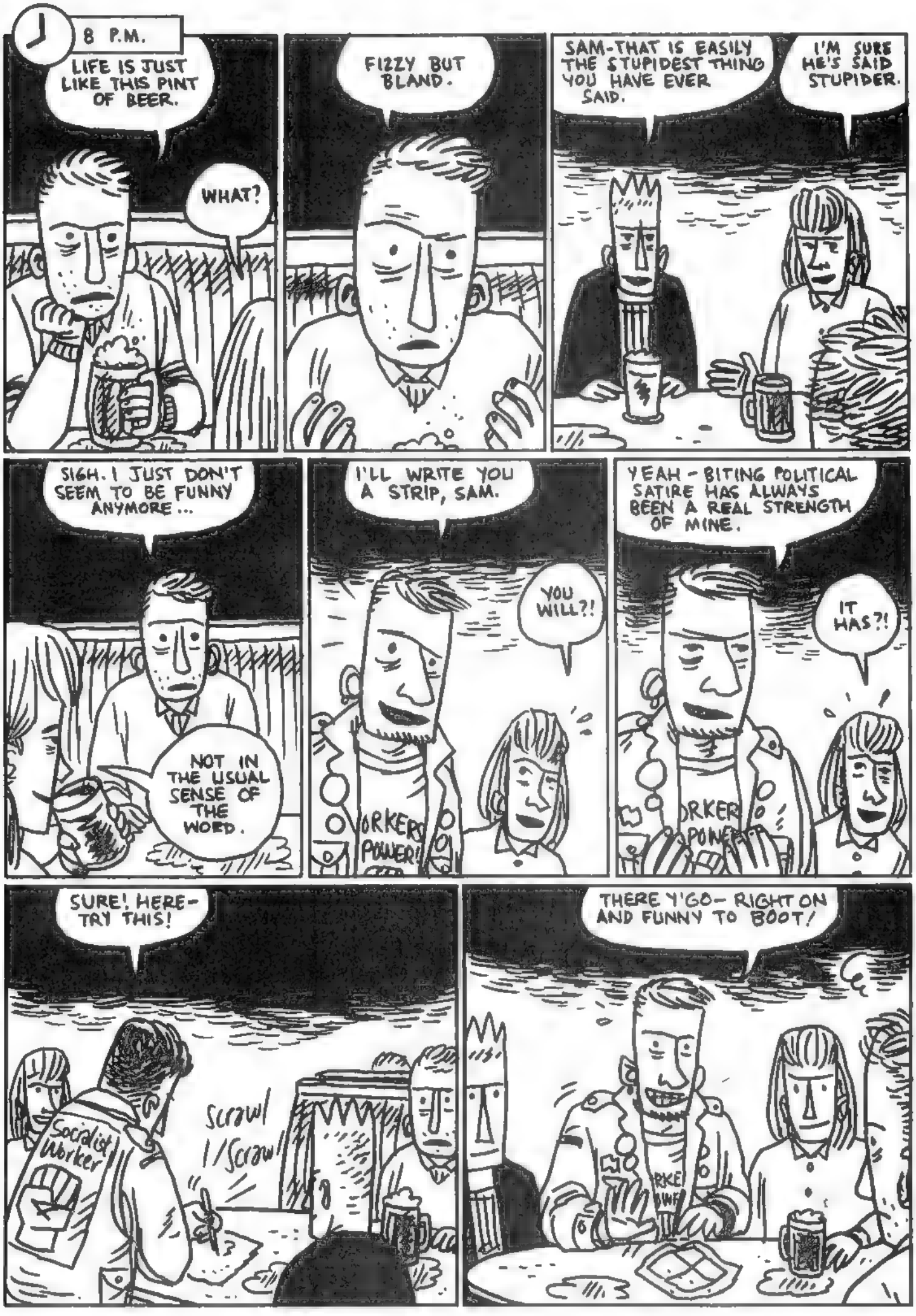
HALFWAY TO HELL . . .

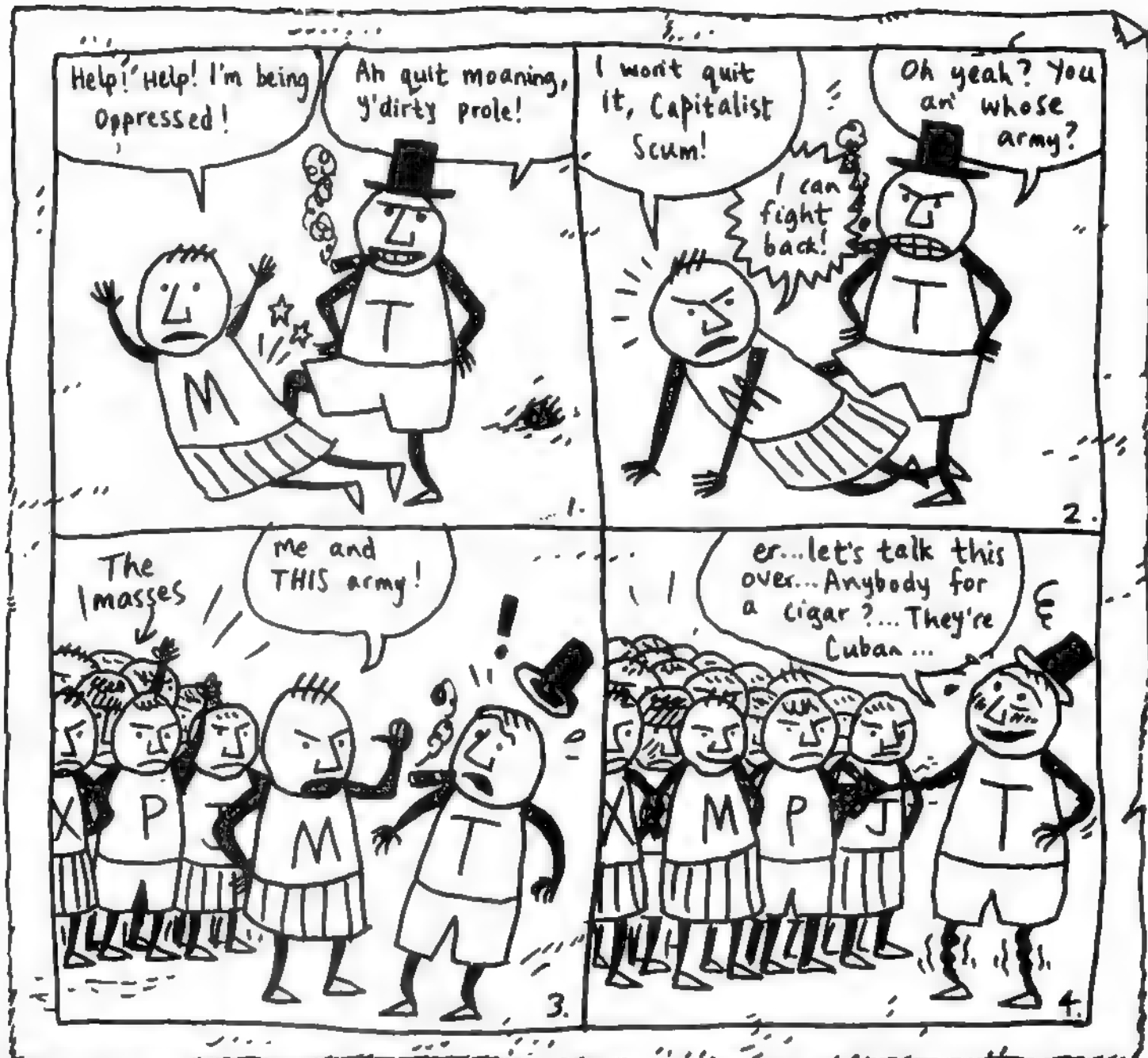
MOXIE & TOXIE AT A PARTY — Sam Zobel


WHY AM I SO DEPRESSED? WHY IS MY LIFE SUCH A MESS?
PROBABLY BECAUSE YOU'RE A COMPLETE DICKHEAD.
XXXX
THAT'S HARDLY VERY SUPPORTIVE OR HELPFUL OF YOU, MOXIE!
YOU'RE BEYOND HELP, BUSTER. WHY DON'T YOU TOP YOURSELF?
XXXX
IF YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE THAT ATTITUDE, I JUST MIGHT DO IT!
AH— YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THE GUTS!
OH YEAH? JUST YOU WATCH ME!
SURE - DO US ALL A FAVOUR!
BANG!
WOW! WHAT A GREAT PARTY!
©'96 Sam Zobel

THIS ISN'T FUNNY, SAM.
EDITOR
IN WHAT SENSE, EXACTLY, ED?
NOT FUNNY. NO LAUGHTER. NO GAGS. THIS IS MEANT TO BE A HUMOUR STRIP, BUT FOR TWO WEEKS NOW, YOU'VE BEEN BRINGING ME STRIPS THAT AREN'T FUNNY!
WELL, I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR.
NO! WRONG! YOU DON'T HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR, SAM! NOW LISTEN, UP: I WANT YOU TO BRING ME A FUNNY STRIP IN 24 HOURS OR YOU'RE SACKED!

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO COME UP WITH A GAG ... I NEED ADVICE!
SPARE CHANGE?
HOME PLEASE
4 P.M.
TISCO GEORGE
CARTOONIST.
KNOCK KNOCK
OKAY SAM! PANEL ONE: MOXIE IS SITTING IN A BAR WITH A VERY SHORT MAN IN A LOUD ORANGE SUIT AND A PANDA BEAR FULL-FACE MASK. THE MAN SAYS: "WHAT DO YOU CALL A MONGOOSE IN A BIKINI?
WHAT DO YOU CALL A MON-GOOSE IN A BIKINI?
PANEL TWO: SAME PICTURE; MOXIE SAYS: "I DUNNO, JOE. WHAT DO YOU CALL A MONGOOSE IN A BIKINI?" AT THEIR FEET, A SMALL FERRET IS CHASING A KIWI AND GOING: "YAP! YAP! YAP! YAP! YAP! YAP!"
I DUNNO, JOE. WHAT DO YOU CALL A MONGOOSE IN A BIKINI?
YAP! YAP! YAP! YAP! YAP! YAP!
PANEL THREE: SAME SCENE AGAIN, ONLY NOW TOXIE - AS THE BARMAN - HAS COME OVER, AND HE SAYS: "ANOTHER DRINK, GUYS?" MOXIE SAYS: "SURE", AND JOE SAYS: "TWO D.B.'S, TOXIE". THE FERRET ORDERS A WHISKY ON THE ROCKS.
ANOTHER DRINK, GUYS?
SURE
TWO D.B.'S TOXIE
I'LL HAVE A WHISKY ON THE ROCKS
LAST PANEL: SAME AGAIN, AS TOXIE POURS THE DRINKS. NO DIALOGUE, EXCEPT FROM THE KIWI, WHO SAYS: "AND A SHANDY, PLEASE, MISTER."
THE END.
AND A SHANDY, PLEASE, MISTER
...
VISA? AMERICAN EXPRESS? A LOOSE BUTTON, PERHAPS?

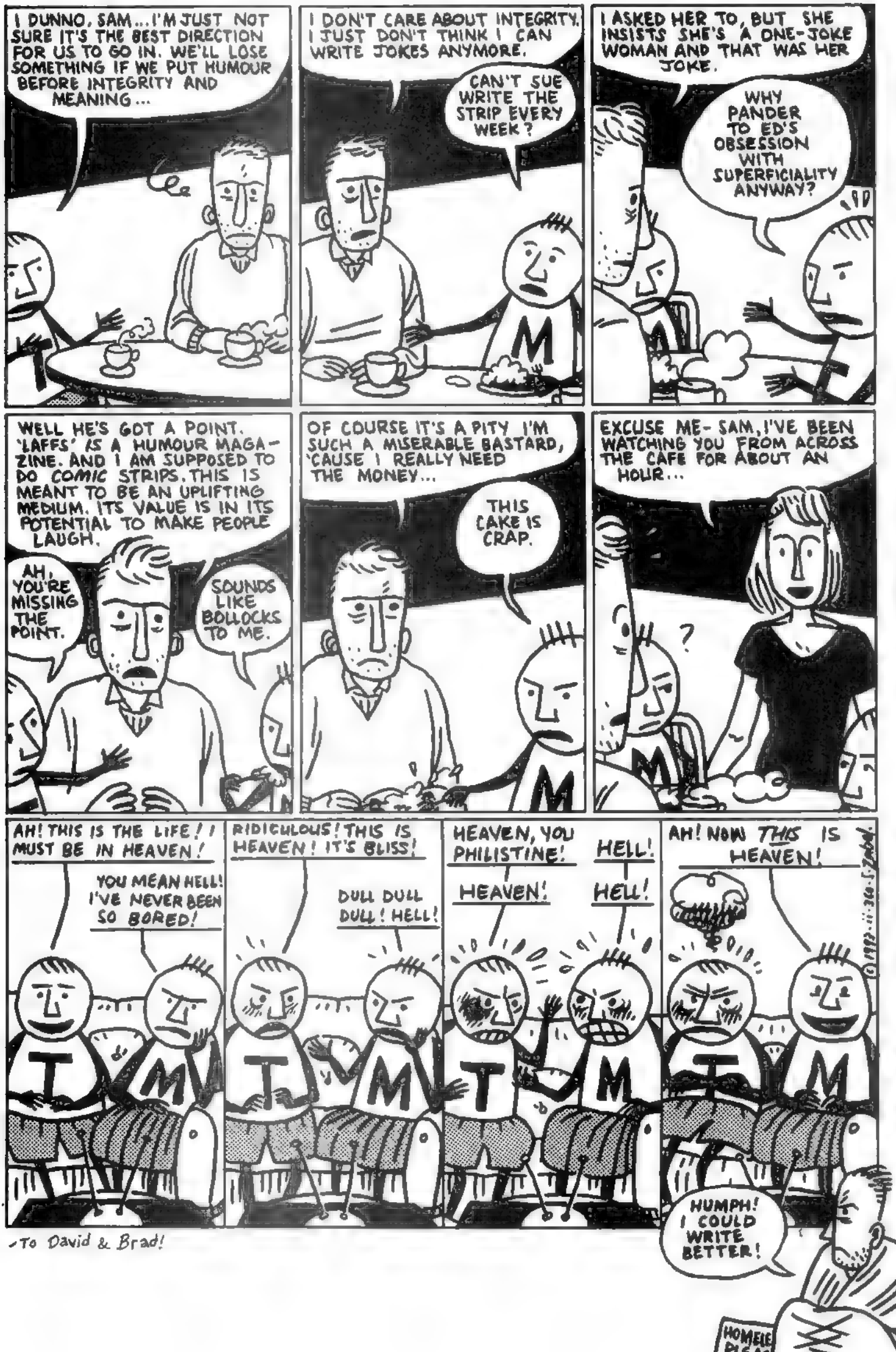

8 P.M.
LIFE IS JUST LIKE THIS PINT OF BEER.
WHAT?
FIZZY BUT BLAND.
SAM-THAT IS EASILY THE STUPIDEST THING YOU HAVE EVER SAID.
I'M SURE HE'S SAID STUPIDER.
SIGH. I JUST DON'T SEEM TO BE FUNNY ANYMORE...
NOT IN THE USUAL SENSE OF THE WORD.
I'LL WRITE YOU A STRIP, SAM.
YOU WILL?!
YEAH - BITING POLITICAL SATIRE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A REAL STRENGTH OF MINE.
IT HAS?!
SURE! HERE- TRY THIS!
Socialist Worker
Scrawl
Scrawl
THERE Y'GO- RIGHT ON AND FUNNY TO BOOT!


Help! Help! I'm being Oppressed!
Ah quit moaning, y'dirty prole!
1.
I won't quit it, Capitalist Scum!
I can fight back!
Oh yeah? You an' whose army?
2.
The masses
me and THIS army!
3.
er...let's talk this over... Anybody for a cigar?... They're Cuban...
4.

HA HA
HA HA
HA HA
UH... I DUNNO, JIM...
WELL SUE OBVIOUSLY THINKS IT'S FUNNY!
NOT IN THE USUAL SENSE OF THE WORD.
LOOK - I'LL GIVE YOU A DOLLAR IF YOU TELL ME A GOOD JOKE.
WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE - WHOOPI GOLDBERG?!

3 A.M.
SIIIIGH... IT JUST WON'T COME. EVERY-THING I WRITE IS MISERABLE...
PERHAPS I MISSED MY TRUE VOCATION WHEN I BECAME A CARTOONIST... MAYBE I WAS MEANT TO BE A MORTICIAN... OR ELSE MORRISSEY...
I USED TO BE FUNNY ONCE... WHEN I WAS A STUDENT. WHERE ARE ALL THOSE STRIPS I DREW THEN?
AH HAH! HERE IT IS! MY OLD PORTFOLIO!
HAR HAR! GUFFAW! CHUCKLE! THOSE WERE THE DAYS, EH? WHEN LIFE WAS SWEET AND SIMPLE... AH, HOW WE LAUGHED...
AND NOW WHAT? LOOK AT ME! USELESS. GRIM. WHAT WENT WRONG?
RAN OUT OF DRUGS, I GUESS.

8 A.M.
GRZZZ...
?
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
SONIC YOUTH
QBIXZGK?
MORNING SAM. PUT THE KETTLE ON - I'M HERE TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
HERE.
IT'S A JOKE.
CONGRATULATIONS. GOT ANYTHING TO EAT?
12 NOON.
LAFFS
WELL SAM - I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D DO IT, BUT CONGRATULATIONS! THIS IS ACTUALLY FUNNY.
THANK YOU SIR.
SURE SAM - KEEP IT FUNNY AND I'LL KEEP YOU ON.


I DUNNO, SAM... I'M JUST NOT SURE IT'S THE BEST DIRECTION FOR US TO GO IN. WE'LL LOSE SOMETHING IF WE PUT HUMOUR BEFORE INTEGRITY AND MEANING...
I DON'T CARE ABOUT INTEGRITY. I JUST DON'T THINK I CAN WRITE JOKES ANYMORE.
CAN'T SUE WRITE THE STRIP EVERY WEEK?
I ASKED HER TO, BUT SHE INSISTS SHE'S A ONE-JOKE WOMAN AND THAT WAS HER JOKE.
WHY PANDER TO ED'S OBSESSION WITH SUPERFICIALITY ANYWAY?
WELL HE'S GOT A POINT. 'LAFFS' IS A HUMOUR MAGAZINE. AND I AM SUPPOSED TO DO COMIC STRIPS. THIS IS MEANT TO BE AN UPLIFTING MEDIUM. ITS VALUE IS IN ITS POTENTIAL TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH.
AH, YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT.
SOUNDS LIKE BOLLOCKS TO ME.
OF COURSE IT'S A PITY I'M SUCH A MISERABLE BASTARD, 'CAUSE I REALLY NEED THE MONEY...
THIS CAKE IS CRAP.
EXCUSE ME- SAM, I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU FROM ACROSS THE CAFE FOR ABOUT AN HOUR...
?
AH! THIS IS THE LIFE! I MUST BE IN HEAVEN!
YOU MEAN HELL! I'VE NEVER BEEN SO BORED!
RIDICULOUS! THIS IS HEAVEN! IT'S BLISS!
DULL DULL DULL! HELL!
HEAVEN, YOU PHILISTINE!
HEAVEN!
HELL!
HELL!
AH! NOW THIS IS HEAVEN!
HUMPH! I COULD WRITE BETTER!
HOMELESS PLEASE HELP
T
M

-To David & Brad!

Café Underground.

Chapter Two:

The Lions' Roar

I am Abraham, and I am the author of this story.* The events I describe, however, are true. They took place in Auckland City during the summer of 1986. My friends were carefree then - partying, flirting - all totally oblivious to the disaster that loomed ahead. If you missed Chapter One, this is the story so far:

Abe (me). *Vicki* (my flatmate),

Alex , *Geoffrey*

, and the beautiful *Patrice*, (whom I adored), abandon a drunken party at Alex's flat, & go for coffees (etc.) at the Café *Underground*

where...

...Geoffrey and Vicki pursue *James*...

...and I pursue Patrice...

But *then*..

Enter a mysterious stranger, who, by devious playing out of tarot cards,

...ensnares in his treacherous spell of seduction...

...Patrice...

*Except that Abe can't draw for shit, so he's persuaded *me*-Barney Hotere-to draw it.

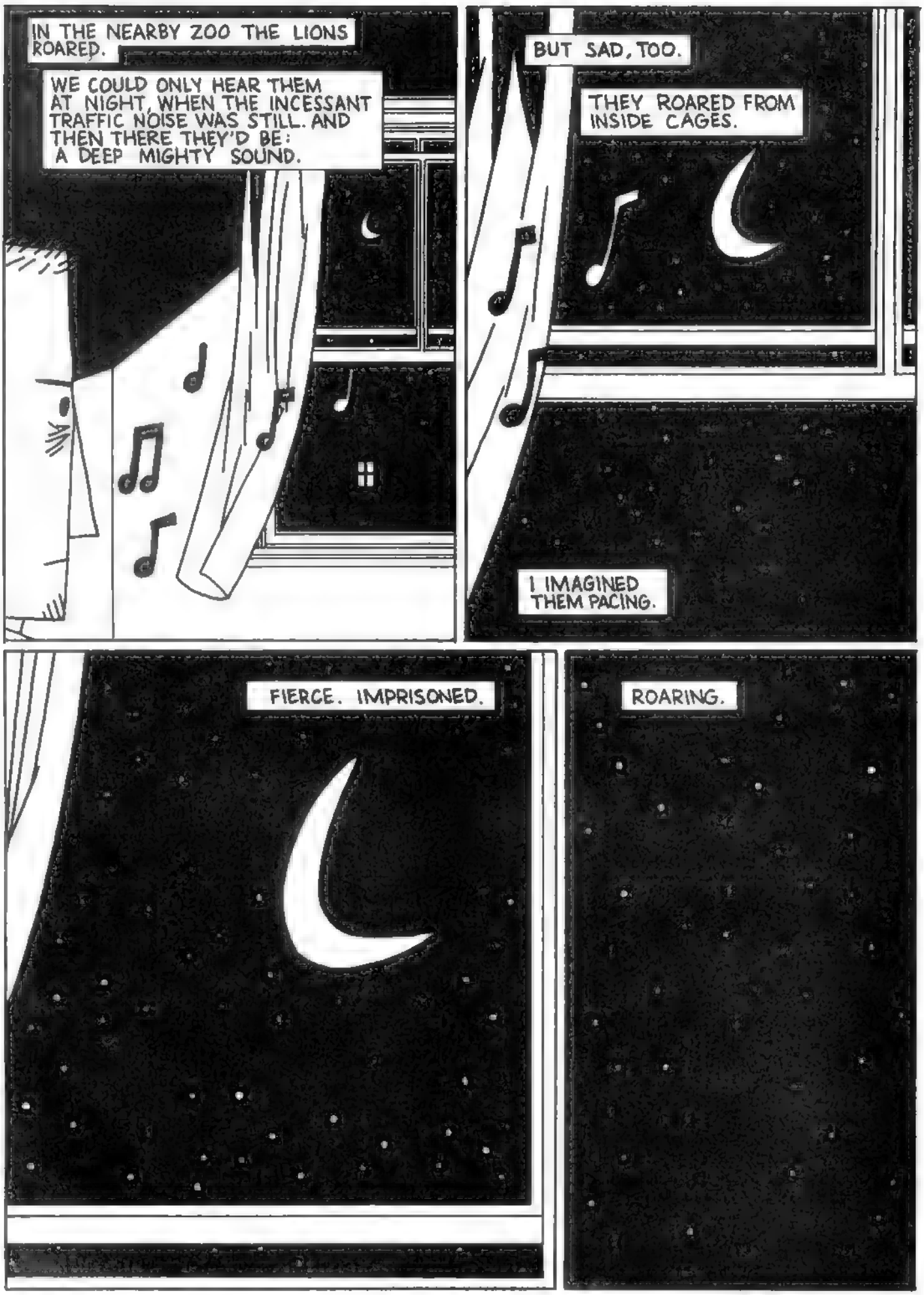
FUCKED IF I CAN SEE IT... NOT THAT I'D KNOW IT IF I DID...
GODDAMNED FUCKING KEYS -
AR SHIT!
JANGLE!
THEY SAY IT'S A FAINT SMUDGE ABOUT THE SIZE OF A PLANET. I CAN SEE SEVERAL FAINT SMUDGES, BUT THAT'S PROBABLY DUE TO THAT CHEAP WHISKY...
SHUT UP AND HELP ME FIND THE KEYS.
WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING FOR, ANY-WAY?
HALLEY'S COMET.
HOW DID IT GO?
YOU MEAN JAMES?

YEAH. WELL?
THE BASTARD'S GAY. ARSEHOLE.
SOUR GRAPES.
YEAH WELL- IT'S GETTING TO BE A TREND ISN'T IT? EVERY DECENT MALE IN THIS CITY TURNS OUT TO BE EITHER MARRIED OR GAY.
WHEN IT COMES TO LOVE, NONE OF US ARE HAVING ANY LUCK...
I DON'T KNOW. I CAN GET A FUCK WHENEVER I WANT- LIKE AT THE PARTY. BUT EXCITEMENT! PASSION! A GOOD FUCK! ...WHERE IS IT?
THE POSERS GET IT ALL...
PATRICE?
SHE LEFT WITH THAT POSEY WANKER WITH THE TAROT.
GOD! WHO CAN BLAME HER! HE WAS GORGEOUS!
GORGEOUS?

HE WAS A VISION! EVERY TIME I SAW HIM I HAD TO PINCH MYSELF...
CRAP. HE WAS A COMPLETE FAKE - ALL RAYBANS AND HAIRGEL.
WHEREAS YOU'RE ALL MAN OF COURSE...
HUMPH.
STILL, I'D HAVE THOUGHT HE WAS ABOVE BEING TAKEN IN BY PATRICE'S EYE-FLUTTERING ACT.
YUK YUK
CHOCOLATE.

WELL.
WELL.
YAWN
I'M GOING TO BED.
ALREADY?
GOODNIGHT.

GOODNIGHT.
CLICK.
PPRROOWR
I LISTENED TO RECORDS FOR A WHILE, WITH JACQUES FOR COMPANY.
IT WAS ALWAYS SO HARD TO GO- ALONE -TO THAT COLD BED.
THAT WAS THE HARDEST THING: LIKE ADMITTING DEFEAT FOR ANOTHER DAY.
I COVER THE WATERFRONT
THE PAR
Prrrrr
Prrrr
Billie Holiday

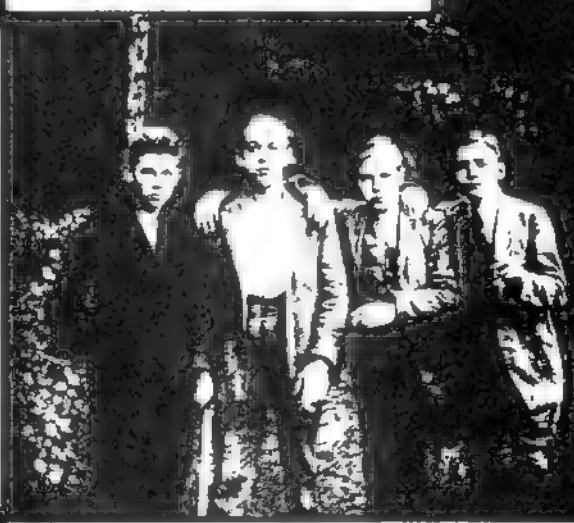

IN THE NEARBY ZOO THE LIONS ROARED.
WE COULD ONLY HEAR THEM AT NIGHT, WHEN THE INCESSANT TRAFFIC NOISE WAS STILL. AND THEN THERE THEY'D BE: A DEEP MIGHTY SOUND.
BUT SAD, TOO.
THEY ROARED FROM INSIDE CAGES.
I IMAGINED THEM PACING.
FIERCE. IMPRISONED.
ROARING.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Men that Perish.

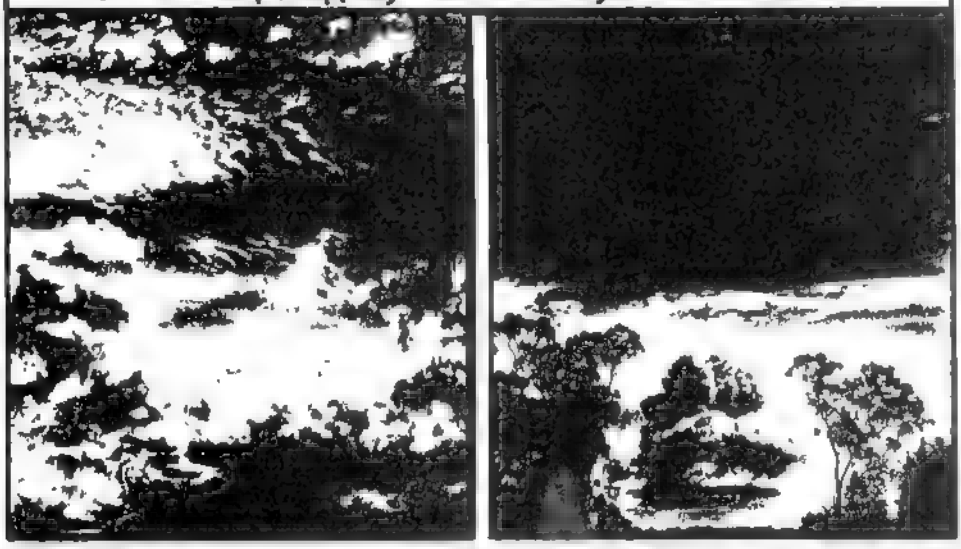
'Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
Their boisterous devotion to the sun,
Not as a god, but as a god might be,
Naked among them, like a savage source.
Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
Out of their blood, returning to the sky;
And in their chant shall enter, voice by voice,
The windy lake wherein their lord delights,
The trees, like serafin, and echoing hills,
That choir among themselves long afterward.
They shall know well the heavenly fellowship
of men that perish and of summer morn.
And whence they came and whither they shall go
The dew upon their feet shall manifest.'

'Sunday Morning' (VII), Wallace Stevens.



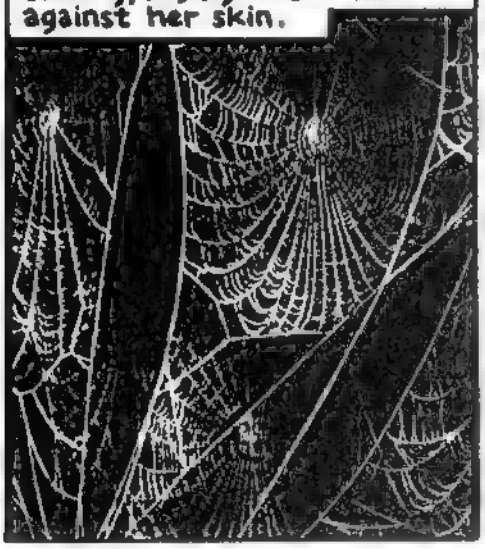
© 1989 By KUPE/DYLAN HORROCKS. TO TIM.

Today my lover draws me as the sky, spread above, pale grey then bright emerald, then burning crimson, flecked with clouds of snow or fire, dropping rain or sunlight to the earth.



Today my lover draws me as a piece of driftwood, veined and cracked, smoothed by the sea.

Today my lover will draw me as a drop of sperm - warm, then cooling, drying like a web - against her skin.

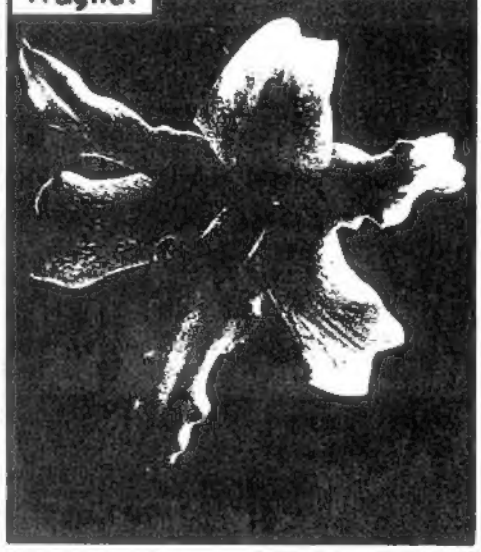


Today my lover draws me as a raised fist, made of stone, defiant.

Today my lover draws me as a beautiful curve, and soft skin, warm to touch.

Today my lover draws me as a thunderstorm, shattering heavy clouds with flashes of rage.

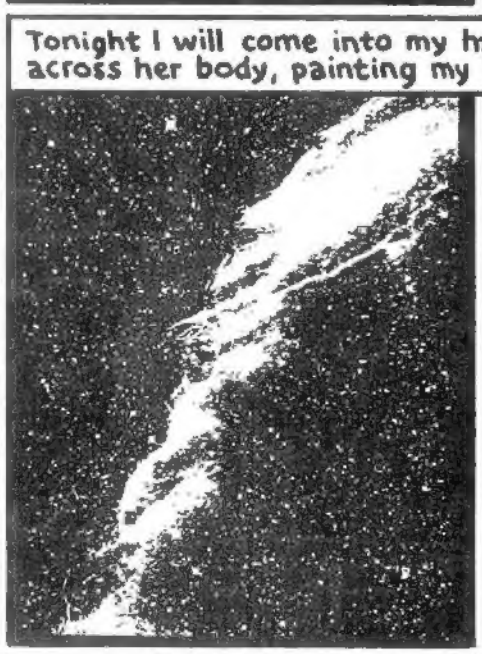
Today my lover will draw me as a pale flower, pretty and fragile.



Today my lover draws me as a sleeping lion - lying in the sun, its thick fur full of warmth and gold.

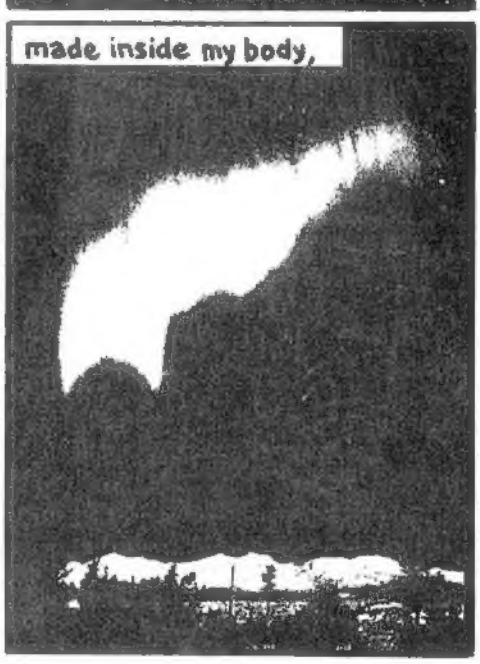
Today my lover will draw me as a rainbow shot across the sky, not yet fading.

Tonight I will come into my hand, and trace my fingers across her body, painting my life in sperm for her to see.

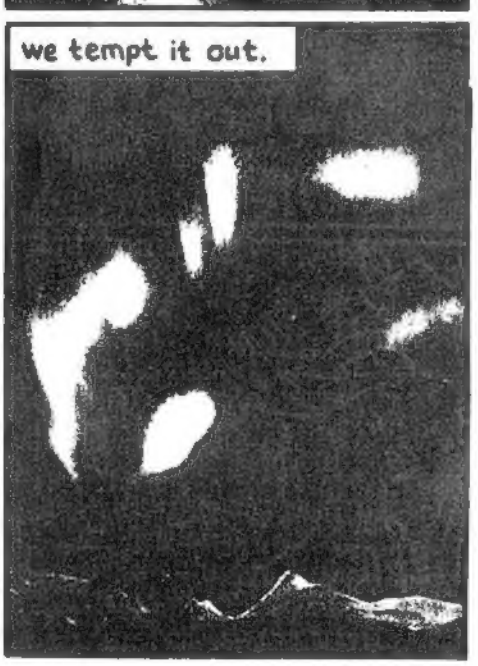


Silver cum,

made inside my body,



we tempt it out.



Dear Mrs. Hicks...

Write to: **Dolan Hicks (mrs.), Pickle, P.O. Box 5512, Wellesley St., Auckland 1, New Zealand**

And now a letter from Neale Blanden, in Australia:

Hi, Dylan!
Been meaning to write for a while now to tell ya how much I enjoyed the 1st issue of **Pickle**. I've always liked your **Fox** stuff and was interested on hearing about this 'new' comic and the continuing story of Cafe Underground (after reading that piece in the **Fox Special**) I don't know, but ya work has a nice lyrical quality in a lot of the pieces, then you'll give us some kick ass funnies with Moxie 'n' Toxie. Plus, you can *really* draw (ya bastard!) So I'm 'biting the bit' awaiting No. 2.

GOOD LUCK!!
Neale

P.S. You 'lived' in England?!! I was there for a month. ENOUGH! ENOUGH!

Yep. I did stuff for the Fantagraphics **Foxes**, please don't hold this against me... (I think of those as my 'learning strips.') Hope you enjoy this stuff; big small press scene happening in Australia at the moment.

We certainly did enjoy the stuff you sent, Neale (two issues of his aptly named mini-comic, Beautiful Artform & his mini Holiday Sketch Book Cha-Cha) and recommend them to any who want to sample the mysteries of the Southern Continent's cartooning scene (see the Hicksville Hit Parade for details). We're sorry you had to bite the bit for so long for No. 2, but we promise No. 3 will be out more promptly! The Foxstuff Neale mentions appeared in Fox Comics, an impressive Australian anthology which lasted several years before succumbing to the rigours of small-press publishing (the last few were distributed by Fantagraphics). The prequel to Cafe is "Little Death," reprinted in Reactor Girl #6 by Tragedy Strikes Press.

We also got some entries to last issue's competition: Name three interesting facts about New Zealand. Marc Stimpfle, of Spokane, WA writes:

I was intrigued to find, during one of my very infrequent forays into comic book land, a floppy tome of humor and strain-of-consciousness originating, it is presumed, in kiwi-land – in a place called "Hicksville"? Or is that being playful. Well, anyway, for what it's worth, here are three things I know about En-Zed:

1.) The shape of the N. Island bears a striking resemblance to that of a pancreas – in some humans.

2.) Two pints of Waikato brew are buried deep in the cellar of a two-storey, two-flat house (unless the bulldozer got to it first) situated astride a major fault line running along Church St., in Wellington.

3.) Wimbleton, a tiny berg south of Napier about 6 miles from the east coast beach, has a single petrol station which doubles as a "hotel" (which really means, in Kiwi, "place-to-drink-heavily-occasionally-till-one-is-pissed"); there's a snooker table that's so old, Neville Chamberlain had a chance to play at it – but he couldn't find Wimbleton, or the N. Island, for that matter. It's used now mainly to pasture sheep.

I swear, I'm not making this up. I know a lot more about the country– Maoris and their tongues; unpronounceable names of cities, plants, animals, and communicable diseases; rugby, racing, tramping, cricket, and rooting, and how to eat sea eggs and pippies without chundering – but I don't want to bore you.

Fondly,
Marc Stimpfle

And also this from Brian M. Biggs, of Grand Prairie, TX:

To whom it may concern,
Just sat down with my coffee and Total Raisin Bran and read **Pickle** out loud to my cat, Tarzan. Needless to say, I enjoyed it quite a lot and am now writing for 2 reasons.

1.) I want paper cuts!

2.) I have included some postcards of a book of mine that is being published by Fantagraphics and is *expected* to be out around April 1st. It, like the story of Mr. Lupicinus and Cynthia, was an out-of-control leap into the unknown. It was scripted to be a short ten-panel strip and quickly transmogrified into 50-something pages and then sat under my bed taunting me for 16 months. I thought that the similarities were weird, to say the least, and I thought I'd give y'all a look. Also, I would like to send some of these cards to Kupe and Mr. Horrocks. Might I ask for a mailing address? Well, tell Mrs. Hicks "thank you" for **Pickle**, and take care.

Brian M. Biggs.

P.S. 3 interesting things about New Zealand:

1.) More Volkswagens (Beetles) per capita than anywhere in the world (excluding Germany, California, and the United States).

2.) My Uncle James went there on vacation in 1969. He found a dog but it died before he returned to the States. He has nice photos.

3.) I am a big fan of the Auckland Athletics major league baseball team. Also the Auckland Raiders before they moved to Los Angeles.

Well, Brian, first I'll answer a couple of your questions:

1.) If you really want paper cuts, just try running your fingers along the edge of this comic. That

usually does the trick. As for the Tragedy Strikes catalogue of the same name – I fear it's now a little out of date. But you'll be happy to know that you can find Tragedy Strikes back issues in the new Black Eye catalogue now available.

2.) To send your cards to Kupe and Mr. Horrocks, just use the above address. I certainly hope your book goes well, and will be sure to order some for our little bookshop here in Hicksville!

Contest Corner

And now... the winner of our competition to name three interesting things about New Zealand is:

Marc Stimpfle of Spokane, Washington, USA

Marc wins an assortment of New Zealand mini-comics by Dylan, Roger Langridge, Terry Rota, Craig Wilson, and more, to further his not inconsiderable antipodean knowledge. The comics will be on their way to you in the post!

This issue's new competition is:

Name a Prime Minister of New Zealand – past or present – and tell us his or her most memorable achievement or feature. If you like, include a drawing of your chosen PM! (Once again – if you're at a loss, just invent one; heaven knows we could certainly do with a wider choice than we've hitherto had!).

The winner's prize will be a collection of New Zealand political cartoons.

Send your entries today to the address above.

THE Hicksville Hit Parade

In Hicksville, people are reading...

Beautiful Artform & Holiday Sketchbook Cha-Cha

Beautiful Artform #4 & #5 – $2.00 each
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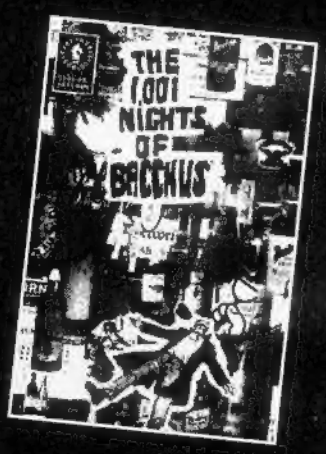
New Zealand's unique comics/culture magazines edited by Cornelius Stone. **Razor** 5-10 and **FOS** 1-4 are $3.00 (NZ) each and **Razor II** (Knuckles the Malevolent Nun), **FOS** 4-5 and **Knuckles is Selling Out** are all $5.00 (NZ) each.

Available from Cornelius Stone, 61 Mt. Eden Road, Auckland, New Zealand. Cornelius can also acquire for you copies of all sorts of NZ mini-comics, so don't be shy.

1001 Nights of Bacchus



by Eddie Campbell (Dark Horse)
Eddie's a very charming Scotsman now living in Australia. He's also drawing Alan Moore's **From Hell** and various other things, but we're all very keen on this book because 5 pages are drawn by our very own Dylan! The rest is awfully good, too, of course!

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